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LETTER DATED 19 JANUARY 1998 FROM THE CHARGÉ D'AFFAIRES A.I.
OF THE PERMANENT MISSION OF YUGOSLAVIA TO THE UNITED NATIONS
ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

I have the honour to transmit herewith the text of the Declaration of the Federal Government of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia concerning the expiration of the mandate of the United Nations Transitional Administration for Eastern Slavonia, Baranja and Western Sirmium dated 16 January 1998 (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would have the text of the present letter and its annex circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Vladislav JOVANOVIĆ
Chargé d'affaires a.i.

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Annex

Declaration of the Federal Government concerning the expiration of the mandate of the United Nations Transitional Administration for Eastern Slavonia, Baranja and Western Sirmium, issued at Belgrade on 16 January 1998

The Federal Government is of the view that in the implementation of the Basic Agreement on the Region of Eastern Slavonia, Baranja and Western Sirmium (Erdut Agreement) significant positive results have been achieved in the past two years in calming down the situation and laying the groundwork for peace, stability and development of the region. The United Nations Transitional Administration for Eastern Slavonia, Baranja and Western Sirmium (UNTAES) has made a major contribution to that end, as has the Serb side, which as one of the signatories to the Basic Agreement in all phases has demonstrated readiness towards full cooperation, openness and consistent commitment to the goals of the Agreement. Throughout the whole transitional period, the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia has fully supported and rendered concrete assistance to the efforts of the international community and UNTAES in fulfilling their mandate.

The Government of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia considers that the decision on the continued presence of the international community in the region of Eastern Slavonia, Baranja and Western Sirmium after the expiration of the UNTAES mandate is very important because there is still an obligation on the part of the international community to continue to be actively engaged in the consistent and full implementation of all commitments with a view to ensuring full and lasting protection of the human and civil rights of the Serbs. The Federal Government therefore fully supports the further active presence of the United Nations and Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe representatives in the region, which represents and additional guarantee for the preservation of its multi-ethnic character, the realization of the lasting equality of all residents in line with European standards and respect for their civil and human rights. In order to create an atmosphere ensuring the full security of persons and their property, tolerance and mutual trust, the Federal Government is of the opinion that it is necessary to efficiently eliminate still lingering sources of insecurity among the residents in the region, such as threats to the physical security of persons, instances of discrimination and unequal employment and educational opportunities, and to realize other human and civil rights.

The Government emphasizes the importance of creating conditions for the successful functioning of the local authorities, particularly the Joint Council of Municipalities, as well as for accelerated social and economic development, with the adequate engagement of the international community.

The Government reaffirms the readiness of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia to ensure that the Serbs and Montenegrins, citizens of the Republic of Croatia, also be granted Yugoslav citizenship. At the same time, the Government reaffirms its commitment to the concept of "soft borders", the establishment and strengthening of small-border traffic, the liberalization of

overall trade and the establishment of a no-visa regime for the citizens of the two countries.

The Federal Government of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia takes this opportunity as well to reaffirm its commitment towards the development of stable, comprehensive and good-neighbourly relations and cooperation with the Republic of Croatia and trusts that the consistent implementation of the goals of the Erdut Agreement and the Agreement on Normalization of Relations between the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and the Republic of Croatia will significantly contribute to the further strengthening of mutual trust and peace and security in the region.